

Mr. Nelson

Copy - 1 Beliefs and Customs - Folkstuff

[GROUPS, GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES?]

Section D. (Isolated Groups)

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview [3?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 27 Hamilton Terrace, New York

DATE October 10, 11, 1938

SUBJECT STORIES OUT OF LOCAL LIFE: Mr. Nelson

1. Date and time of interview

October 10, 11, 1938

2. Place of interview

Eastchester Bay

3. Name and address of informant

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Mr. Nelson, Eastchester Bay, (Baychester).

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Eastchester Bay setting described in Schaefer story; Informant's home or part-time home is a shack on stilts in the water, consisting of a workroom which contains a carpenter's bench; a living room with several panel pictures of boats on which informant sailed. The approach to this combination home-boathouse is along a narrow pier about three feet wide, running about thirty feet from the shore to the boathouse. Round about are small boats, cabin cruisers, rowboats, "kickers".

GROUPS, GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

Section D. (Isolated Groups)

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 27 Hamilton Terrace, New York

DATE October 10, 11, 1938

Library of Congress

SUBJECT STORIES OUT OF LOCAL LIFE: Mr. Nelson

1. Ancestry

Finnish

2. Place and date of birth

Finland, 1875

3. Family

Two sons; (a third son died in an Army hospital after the World War)

4. Places lived in, with dates

Finland, (for about ten years); following which informant served on ships for thirty years; and he has for some fifteen years operated boathouse on Eastchester Bay.

5. Education, with dates

None, but is self-taught sufficiently to read and write simple English.

6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates

Sailor, boatbuilder.

7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant

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Informant is a stockily built old man with wrinkles around eyes which give effect of amiability - a purely physical effect and no reflection of character. His face is red and nose very red and blue-veined; it is a round, full face. His walk was an old mannish shuffling and his gestures sometimes fumbling. He could not hear well, and wore a hearing apparatus.

10. Other Points gained in interview

GROUPS, GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

Section D. (Isolated Groups)

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 27 Hamilton Terrace, New York

DATE October 10, 11, 1938

SUBJECT STORIES OUT OF LOCAL LIFE: Mr. Nelson

(Informant came out of interior to a platform adjoining the pier) I'm yust old man 63 years I don't remember so goot excuse me battery don't work so goot, [(referring?) to hearing apparatus and fumbling at disc). I sailed out England, New Zealand, New York. I vas peeling potatoes for cook when I vass eight years old. I sail only sailing ships no steam. I tell you plenty stories songs nobody print such stories they not so clean. If I get drunk I tell you plenty stories but I better not get drunk. I'm a Finn I can't talk Finnish language

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no more but I'm born there. I only found one country better than New York, that's New Zealand. The laws in that country are goot. Nobody gets rich a man gets 200,000 pounds he can't stay in business. They don't say a man is a millionaire there they say he got 200,000 pounds. (Pointing to pictures of boats): That's Tilly Baker three mast bark from New York and this I can't get name it's too long ago — it's English vessel — no, I can't remember name I work very hard. I have to get out when I was eight years old. I were two years old when fadder died so mudder got a pension but not enough. I get nervous when I think how I slaved in my young days I was next youngest child my fadder was skipper excuse me I better not talk no more.

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NEW YORK

FORM D Extra Comment

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER SAUL LEVITT

ADDRESS 27 Hamilton Terrace, New York City

DATE October 10, 11, 1938

SUBJECT STORIES OUT OF LOCAL LIFE - Mr. Nelson

Conversations with informants previously and with present informant suggest that squatter and other residents along creekshores and rivershores of New York are disposed toward liberal and progressive viewpoints; this is a tentative estimate of an [under-lying?] general idea of this group of Americans and one which may be displaced by further and more complete investigation which, first, is that this form of living away from the conventional pattern of big city living develops independent points of view; secondly, that

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such independent points of view follow progressive lines because the living conditions are bad; and thirdly, that the very fact of people choosing this form of existence indicates a predisposition to escape from or rebel against the ordered scheme of urban life.